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ABSTRACT

This paper recommends new directions for teacher education in the preparation of early childhood (EC) teachers. It reviews the historic fragmentation of the field, present teacher education practice, and the changes needed to address the needs of children from birth to 8 years who increasingly live in poverty, come from minority populations, face violence in their lives, and lack support from both parents. It then recommends that early childhood teacher education programs adopt reforms that: (1) encourage parent involvement in their children's education; (2) prepare EC teachers to work with impoverished children; (3) recognize the unique needs of teen parents; (4) teach EC educators to work with health and social service providers; (5) link good health with school achievement; (6) train EC teachers to be decision-makers and leaders; (7) include violence prevention training; (8) encourage the recruitment of teachers from African-American and Latino groups; (9) prepare EC students to work with children before and after school; (10) offer courses and practicum experiences with children from birth to age 8; (11) integrate EC education and special education; (12) make teachers at ease in a variety of EC settings; (13) address multicultural concerns; and (14) ground programs in developmentally appropriate practice for children in a variety of settings. Includes 31 references. (MDM)

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Reform And Early Childhood Education:
Making Teacher Preparation Professional and Relevant

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Abstract

This paper recommends new directions for teacher education in the preparation of early childhood teachers. It reviews the historic fragmentation of the field, present teacher education practice, and changes needed to address the needs of children birth to eight years who increasingly live in poverty, come from minority populations, face violence in their lives, and lack support from both parents.

Early childhood education is the "new" agenda item for colleges of education, school boards, and school administrators. While national and state policy makers focused on K-12 educational reform, the early childhood profession has been moving toward a new professionalism. Both internal and external professional forces of the 1990s are bringing about a renewed focus on young children and their needs. All children are expected to enter school "ready to learn."

Early childhood professional organizations, state governments, and funding agencies are bringing coherence and structure to the professional development process for both paraprofessionals and credentialed teachers. Education faculty can anticipate an increase in enrollment in early childhood at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Continuing the fragmented business-as-usual approach too often practiced in early childhood education will poorly serve the needs of children, schools, and society.

**Reform And Early Childhood Education:
Making Teacher Education Professional and Relevant**

Early childhood education is again on the national agenda. Head Start is to be fully funded. Public schools increasingly serve children before kindergarten age. Mothers of children under the age of two are entering the work force in record numbers. Increasing numbers of the children under the age of six live in poverty. Violence threatens too many children and youth on a daily basis. Traditional methods and teacher preparation are not enough in such a climate. Early childhood education (ECE) cannot continue to rely on a "system of early childhood preparation and training [that] is characterized by fragmentation, a shortage of qualified personnel, high turnover, inadequate career ladders, too many barriers and too few incentives for training, and a lack of consumer demand for well-trained personnel" (Copple, 1991, p. 7).

The focus now is on preschool children; not since 1965 when policy makers introduced Head Start has there been so much interest in the needs of young children. The first wave of educational reform ignored early childhood, instead sounding the alarm for elementary and secondary schools to address basic skills, graduation requirements, standardized test scores, and teacher education. Until recently early childhood education escaped reformers' notice (Cooper & Eisenhart, 1990). Katz and Goffin (1990) report little research on early childhood teacher education; the Handbook of Research on Teacher Education (Houston, 1990) addresses early education issues only peripherally. State policy groups focused their first reform efforts on elementary and secondary education, leaving early childhood changes until other reforms became institutionalized.

Colleges of education have responded to early education reform in an idiosyncratic fashion. Most delayed addressing changes in early childhood until they had implemented elementary and secondary mandates; too many programs continued to focus on the preparation of kindergarten teachers. In many teacher preparation

programs early childhood education has been only an add-on endorsement to an elementary major.

America 2000 placed early childhood at the reform forefront in 1991 with Goal 1: "By the year 2000 all children in America will start school ready to learn." The National Governors' Association adopted the national goals, making them significant for the states as well. The Carnegie Foundation brought out Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation (Boyer, 1991). The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) organized a network to assist states in launching early childhood initiatives, "reforming current programs, practices, and policies" (Cohen, 1992, p. 5). Early childhood education's time had come.

The early childhood profession, responding to internal pressures, began making concurrent professional changes in the early 1980s. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) launched an accreditation process for early childhood centers in 1981 that became the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAECP) with more than 800 programs in 48 states voluntarily seeking national accreditation by 1992 (S. Bredekamp, personal communication, October 16, 1992). NAEYC brought out guidelines for four- and five-year teacher education programs in 1982 and for associate degree granting institutions in 1985. NAEYC and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) have had strong collaboration during NCATE's recent period of redesign. During the turmoil of changes brought about through NCATE revisions, the early childhood review process has consistently been cited as one of the folio review processes with few problems. During this era the National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) organized to provide a teacher education voice in early childhood professional circles. In 1991 the Carnegie Foundation funded the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development (NIECPD) "to assist in the development and implementation of an effective, coordinated delivery system of early childhood professional preparation" (NAEYC, 1991, p. 37).

Despite these internal moves toward professionalization, until states solved their problems related to elementary and secondary education reform, they delayed changing requirements for early childhood programs and teacher education. As NASBE's initiative indicates, states are now focusing on early childhood reform. States vary enormously in the level of regulation and the agencies providing oversight in the early childhood field. States require teachers in public schools to hold appropriate certification, or a license to teach. "Since 30 states now are providing some public early childhood programs for three- and four-year-olds, there is a trend to revise state early childhood teacher certification guidelines" (McLean & Johnston, 1992, p. 421). States also license preschool programs, but they do not regulate the amount or type of professional preparation needed by teachers in child care and preschool programs. This is in direct contrast with the highly specific licensure regulations of K-12 teacher education. Kindergarten teachers' licensure has been linked to elementary teachers' degree requirements in many states (McCarthy, 1988). NAEYC and the Association of Teacher Educators adopted a position statement on Early Childhood Teacher Certification which was published in the November, 1991 issue of Young Children.

Both internal and external forces gained momentum in the late 1980s to force the early childhood profession and teacher education reformers to consider how changes in elementary and secondary education might affect early education. Since the onset of the women's movement in the early 1970s the number of children under the age of six in school escalated with most children attending some type of kindergarten today. The difference between what constitutes child care and preschool blurred. The Demand and Supply of Child Care in 1990 report by NAEYC and the Urban Institute (Willer, Hofferth, Kisker, Divine-Hawkins, Farquhar, & Glantz, 1991) was the most comprehensive picture to date of the child care market, showing a four-fold increase since the 1970s in the number of children placed in center-based programs. Public schools began to offer before- and after-school programs for children in kindergarten

and the lower grades while the pay gap between public school teachers and child care providers widened. The high turnover rate for teachers of young children in the child care sector became even higher (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, & Pemberton, 1989). Although problems of pay, turnover rate, and professional recognition continue to plague the early childhood profession, students are entering early childhood programs in record numbers as services for young children increased. Colleges of education are expanding early childhood programs. This paper enumerates the problems of traditional early childhood education and offers solutions to preparing teachers for an increasingly diverse field.

Early Childhood Teacher Education

Early childhood teacher educators prepare their students for a mixed professional reward system. Teachers who provide care and education in public schools earn substantially more for teaching nine months than staff in the child care field earn for twelve months work. Child care hours are long and benefits few, yet teachers who provide education and care in programs not under public school sponsorship earn less for what should be similar work. Students who fulfill licensure requirements as they complete degrees can teach in public schools. Others who become Head Start or preschool teachers may have little formal training to teach young children. Increasingly, the early childhood field is using the term "care and education," recognizing the link between these services, regardless of where the services are provided or who provides the care and education. Young children require both.

The early childhood field needs a common language and a common vision of what it can become. NAEYC has worked on a common nomenclature over the last decade. As states revise their early childhood guidelines and institutions change programs, a common vocabulary will strengthen the profession and provide a basis for cohesion. NAEYC's reviews of institutions' early childhood programs for national accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) reveal that even among

4-year colleges and universities, inconsistencies exist about what constitutes early childhood. NAEYC recently added 2-year standards for community colleges and associate degree programs to their 4- and 5-year guidelines, although NCATE does not accredit 2-year programs. Programs traditionally resided in schools, colleges, or departments of education (SCDE), if they linked kindergarten and elementary preparation. Child development programs addressing nursery education often resided in colleges of home economics, or schools of human ecology. The roots of early education spring from education, child development, social work, nursing, and in recent years special education. Each discipline views the field from its own historic bias, using its own set of terms. NAEYC has long defined early childhood as birth to eight years, regardless of whether programs address kindergarten, preschool, day care, primary, or nursery education and the program's departmental affiliation. However, states and SCDEs vary enormously in their definition of what early childhood education encompasses. Even though NAEYC viewed early childhood in broad terms, the roots of division are deep and continue to impact too many teacher education programs.

Historic divisions created barriers. "Early child care, preschool education, and early elementary education are currently viewed and organized as separate fields, with distinct preparation and training paths, financing, and staffing patterns" (Copple, 1991, p. vii). Early education in the U. S. emerged from the conflicting traditions of the kindergarten, nursery school, and child care movements. In the late 19th century independent training schools provided specialized preparation for kindergarten teachers; normal schools designed to train elementary teachers eventually replaced kindergarten training schools (McLean & Johnston, 1992). Professional organizations reinforced the association between kindergarten and primary education as kindergartens became part of the public school system. State departments of education began regulating both kindergarten and elementary education. Eventually, 4-year baccalaureate degree programs supplanted the 3-year normal

school pattern in this country as universities absorbed teacher education programs.

The nursery school movement developed in colleges of home economics with a multidisciplinary perspective of family and child study, social work, psychology, nursing, and medicine. Land grant universities and state university systems designed child development programs incorporating these various views. States do not mandate licensing regulations for graduates of child development programs; however, now that 30 states provide some public school programs for three- and four-year-olds, there is a trend to revise state early childhood teacher licensure to include these programs as well, conforming to NAEYC's early childhood teacher education policies (McLean & Johnston, 1992, p. 421). McCarthy found the most prevalent certification pattern is for teachers of children from three to eight years of age with 42 states requiring teachers in publicly supported kindergartens to hold state licensure (Davis, 1992, p. 423).

Child care training has been only loosely linked to degree programs. Technical schools and Child Development Associate (CDA) non-degree programs provide training for entry level skills; ad hoc in-service programs are the norm. Too often child care providers have no training prior to employment. State child care center licensing standards usually require minimum workshop training or other substantially less stringent preparation than what is mandated for public school early childhood teachers. Public school teachers complete graduate degrees in increasing numbers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) plans to offer an early childhood certificate for master teachers who complete degree programs and demonstrate mastery-level teaching skills (National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, 1991, p. 37).

Direct barriers to training, in addition to the lack of incentives mentioned, are: (a) the cost of classes and lack of support for released time, (b) the time and energy required after long days with children, (c) a lack of academic self-confidence, and (d) irrelevant or

low quality training (Copple, 1991, p. 6). A massive support system will be needed to sell the importance of professional preparation in a field that has required little preparation.

An effective system needed. Delivery of professional development training is chaotic and fragmented in such a climate. Copple suggests an effective system assures a minimal, "generic" level of basic competence, nurtures diversity of training, balances the need for quality with an adequate supply of early childhood workers, recognizes subspecialties within early childhood, fosters productive career ladders, emphasizes the training of directors, coordinators, and lead teachers, maintains access to jobs for individuals of different cultural groups and income levels, creates a continuum of training, maximizes incentives and minimizes barriers to training, and assures stable and adequate funding for training (pp. 7-9). For such a system to work private and public funds from the federal, state, and local levels will need to be coordinated judiciously to maximize the contributions of each type of funding. Unless economic incentives are provided to teachers prepared in four- and five-year degree programs, we could continue a system with head teachers who have only two years preparation. Alternative routes such as CDA and associate degree programs supplant professionally certified teachers in many areas of the country; however, teachers with less than a college degree may lack essential knowledge and skills about child development and how children learn. There is more to know in early education than caring for children's needs. Understandings from health, education, sociology, and child development underlie the professional knowledge required by teachers of young children.

The early childhood knowledge base(s): Early childhood has many knowledge bases that are rooted in child development, social work, family relationships, anthropology, as well as health, developmentally appropriate practice, and special education. The historic roots of early childhood traditions and practices created a diverse regulatory and educational system focused on a multidisciplinary collection of professional concerns.

Bredenkamp and Willer (1992) suggest a "ladder and lattices, cores and cones" knowledge base model for the early childhood field. "Lattices" with interlocking connections portray multiple roles, entry points, and settings instead of a single career ladder model. The "cone" reflects the goal of an expanding, shared knowledge base for an articulated system of professional development through the graduate education levels. When all early childhood staff are professionally prepared to work with children enrolled in whatever portion of the service sector, current inequities in status and compensation among early childhood professionals will be mitigated.

One of the problems that emerges around professional development issues is what skills and knowledge do teacher educators need who teach early childhood courses. There has been a tendency in too many SCDEs to allow anyone to teach in this area because there is a lack of coherence and rigor in the field.

Standards for trainers. Teacher education literature provides more discussion about the process and content of early childhood education than about the background and characteristics of teacher educators. There is a need for standards for trainers. Feeney, Fromberg, Spodek, and Williams (1992, p. 418) suggest that "the role of teacher educator [can be viewed] as an extension of the role of teacher with some important differences." The personal characteristics of teachers of young children that are valued in early childhood teacher educators include: warmth, nurturing, intelligence, and cultural sensitivity. In addition, early childhood teacher educators are advocates, methodologists, and adapters of theory, research, and craft knowledge to fit the needs of teachers and administrators of programs for young children. Early childhood teacher educators teach their students to create lessons and adapt to the needs of the children they teach; teacher educators adapt curriculum, teaching techniques, and research findings to be philosophically consistent with early childhood approaches. Early childhood teacher educators need to have experienced the variety of programs and approaches impacting staff working directly with children.

Institutional variables. Teacher educators teaching early childhood courses have not always held appropriate credentials, degrees, and backgrounds. This was particularly true in schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDE) with add-on endorsements for kindergarten teachers. NAEYC in reviewing early childhood folios of institutions seeking NCATE accreditation finds early childhood courses taught too often by faculty who were not themselves adequately prepared in ECE. SCDEs with little commitment to the unique aspects of early education have allowed faculty without an early childhood background to teach these courses. This attitude seems to indicate anyone can teach these courses, much the way preschools have allowed anyone who "loves little children" to staff programs. NCATE Board of Examiner teams determine whether the professional background of faculty meet guidelines for "appropriateness of fit" for their teaching assignments. Staff who are qualified through completion of a professional early childhood program and are experienced with young children from birth to eight years should supervise practicum students and deliver early childhood instruction. The delivery system can be effective if people who know how to work appropriately with young children supervise students' efforts (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986). Professors with elementary experience and professional backgrounds may not differentiate sufficiently between curriculum for children 0-8 years and 6-12 years.

Students may get quite different messages from faculty in the same department who have not established linkages between early childhood and elementary education. We have separated these areas so effectively that appropriate transition experiences have been lacking (Office of Education Research and Improvement, 1992). The Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition (1993) has released a National Directory of Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Institutions. This directory lists under each state colleges and universities' locations, contact persons and telephone numbers, and whether they are public or private institutions, the types of ECE programs offered, and whether they offer a Child Development

Associate (CDA) training program. This first directory omits some programs but gives prospective students an opportunity to survey the range of programs available in any state. Institutions list preschool, infant/toddler, and school-age options. They do not indicate the articulation, or lack thereof, with their elementary programs. Some are certificate programs, others are undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The preparation of the faculty in any program is not delineated.

NCATE attempts to match faculty responsibilities with formal preparation; however, not all institutions come under NCATE scrutiny. Standards for trainers will continue to be an issue especially where teacher education programs do not seek accreditation or meet NCATE guidelines. The majority of people in the early childhood field do not hold 4-year early childhood degrees and no national standards apply to the many trainers in 2-year colleges and technical schools. CDA trainers may meet rigorous screening procedures, but CDA standards do not coincide with standards needed for early childhood teacher educators in colleges and universities.

Another aspect of developing standards for trainers is that institutions reward teaching and research differentially. Early childhood professors tend to be practitioners, relying on psychologists to provide research for the field. Research institutions may have difficulty hiring ECE faculty who are knowledgeable about ECE and who are research oriented. Colleges and universities cope in various ways with the dilemma of rewarding faculty who are successful in research and publishing, knowing that undergraduate teacher education calls on faculty to model good teaching practices. Some institutions are concluding that "teaching and research are inescapably incompatible" (Barnett, 1992, p. A40). Their solutions are increasingly creative and certainly diverse. We will likely conclude in early childhood that we cannot accept a narrow view of trainer preparation, just as we have not been able to accept a narrow view of other facets of the field.

Institutions address professional development issues from a variety of perspectives. Increasingly institutions recognize that assisting faculty to re-tool and re-new in order to be productive and useful involves adult education principles. Adult learners, whether faculty or students, have special needs. Increasingly the ECE field attracts adults who left other professions to enter ECE. Teaching centers have sprung up on campuses across the country to aid in improving teaching across disciplines. Professional development efforts include a realization that teaching adults is a special undertaking.

Adult learner issues. Teacher educators acknowledge that children's thinking is different from adults' thinking, but do little to recognize that the needs of adult learners change over time. Lilian Katz (1992) provocatively reveals her own consternation about how to teach early education undergraduates after years of successfully teaching graduate students. She found that undergraduates have not reached an adult stage of development enabling them to relate adequately to either teachers' or parents' dilemmas. They rejected topics she believed essential to their preparation. Katz herself found the knowledge base and relevant content too thin to support an entire course on parent involvement techniques. She could not locate sufficient numbers of appropriate practicum sites where her students could work with professionally-prepared staff. Within the department, students encountered conflicting ideologies and contradictory techniques often taught by faculty unavailable for informal contact where such differences in perspectives could be explored further. Katz recommends an "optimum informality principle" that allows frequent informal contact with students, uncovering learners' needs. Faculty in research institutions are not likely to have such time available. Graduate teaching assistants carry the burden of undergraduate classes while also carrying heavy responsibility for their own professional development; thus, teaching assistants also may not have the time for undergraduates to process learning informally. They may never have taught adults before and

may be struggling to be successful students, and teachers of adults, simultaneously.

Elizabeth Jones (1986) recommends "an active learning approach" that is philosophically consistent with best practice in early childhood education. Her book, Teaching Adults: An Interactive Approach, tells her story about how to teach child development while building relationships, empowering learners, valuing diversity, and trusting students' potential--approaches early childhood teachers practice with young children. Elbow (1986) suggests that since learning is thinking and teaching is interdisciplinary, learning is helping students figure out categories (p. 13). Students come knowing many things, having diverse backgrounds, putting together understandings in unique ways. Early childhood, more than other teacher education areas, must find methods to help students figure out categories about what they may already know. However, "there remains the question of whether there is an adequate knowledge base for early childhood practice that can serve as a foundation for professional practice" (Spodek, 1992, p. 4).

With the ongoing problems for early childhood education of historic divisions, a diffuse knowledge base, a lack of standards for teacher educators, and institutional variables, it is small wonder that early childhood teacher education reform has been slow in coming. As early childhood takes on the urgency of political issues related to young children and their families, reform of early childhood teacher education is necessary. The present political climate escalates the problem of an increasing poverty population under the age of five. Violence against children, health reform, homelessness, AIDS, and other tasks of the nineties increasingly emerge as child and family concerns that this society cannot ignore. Early childhood will continue to attract increasing numbers of students who want to use their resources and expertise to assist in solving these and other problems. Many of these students believe that the way to work on solutions is to prevent these and similar problems in very young children. They are coming, and will continue to enroll, in early childhood and associated programs in hopes of finding the skills to

make a better place for children at risk in this country. SCDEs cannot continue business as usual and meet the needs of the new wave of students or meet the needs of the next generation of children in our schools. Reform, or major paradigm shifts, are required to supply the skills needed by the next teachers of the young.

Early Childhood Teacher Education Reform

Those outside the teaching profession controlled the first wave of reform initiated by the Holmes Group, the National Governors' Association, state reformers, and NCATE. These reforms primarily focused on raising academic standards. Reformers called for testing teachers and students and raising achievement scores; early childhood agendas were mostly ignored. The second wave of reform has moved away from such narrow goals and methods to a more child-centered learning environment that incorporates nongraded classrooms, cooperative learning, and parent and teacher control of schools--all compatible with ideals valued by the early childhood profession. As President Clinton enacts his educational agenda, the goals of early childhood education emerge more strongly than any time in the last 25 years.

As state and national reforms moved into place during the 1990s, early childhood programs expanded their courses to reflect NAEYC and NCATE requirements for a birth to eight years perspective. Elementary education became more liberal arts-based as reform took effect, separating further the elementary and early childhood curricula. It became apparent that the hodgepodge of courses, foci, and separation between early education and elementary and early education and child care training should not continue. Alternate routes such as CDA and associate degree programs can provide training for some levels of the ladder of professional development. The National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development (1991, pp. 36-37) will build consensus for developing an articulated delivery system in spite of the barriers to achieving a career development system for the early childhood profession that includes regulatory, institutional, and economic

impediments. While NAEYC has long defined early childhood as birth to eight years, few professional development programs have been equally committed to preparing personnel to serve in programs across this age span. Barriers remain to a fully articulated training systems.

Uncoordinated efforts. In a field that is regulated by diverse policy groups that have not coordinated their efforts on more than a superficial level, the disparity between requirements for **care** and **education** is wide. Child care and preschools are regulated by different standards and bureaucratic agencies unrelated to the system regulating public schools. Only half the states offer specialized early childhood licenses (NAEYC, 1991, p. 37). As public schools expand services to children younger than four, traditional kindergarten teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare teachers to work with younger children or to coordinate services with primary grade teachers.

Lack of incentives cause barriers to training. Professional credentialing and state regulatory systems provide incentives that drive training in most fields. "Both are inadequate in the early childhood field. Regulatory incentives for training are uneven across the states and are minimal in most. More than half the states do not require any preservice education or training for child care workers, and only about a quarter require more than ten hours of in-service annually" (Copple, 1991, p. 6). Day care licensing regulations operate from a minimum standards perspective while teacher education reform is moving to ensure a high quality preparation and credentialing process. The disparity in views and the diversity of the field interfere with gaining easy support from all segments of the early childhood community for a coordinated professional development system. While K-12 teacher licensing agencies strongly influence teacher education programs, Head Start and child care teachers have no similar requirements, but may choose voluntary assessment through the CDA process. "More than 27,000 CDA credentials have been awarded to date" (Feeney, Fromberg, Spodek,

& Williams, 1992, p. 417). This is a large cadre of alternatively credentialed teachers.

Inadequate compensation and benefits is the other major lack of incentive for training. Pay for teachers of young children who are not in the public schools often hovers near the minimum wage level with few retirement or health benefits. Such low financial incentives affect recruitment to the field, stimulate rapid turnover, and discourage preservice training. Additional training is rarely linked to additional compensation. Parents do not often choose providers based on their level of education.

Lack of economic incentives. In a field where many service providers are paid the minimum wage, economic incentives for professional preparation are few. "The average hourly wage is \$5.35 for this predominantly female work force" (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, & Pemberton, 1989, p. 45), consequently, annual turnover of teaching staff nearly tripled in the last decade and reached 41 percent in 1988 (p. 44). A concomitant effort to raise salaries and benefits is necessary if professionalization efforts will be successful. When all early childhood staff are professionally prepared to work with children enrolled in whatever portion of the service sector, current inequities in status and compensation among early childhood professionals will be mitigated.

Entry-level vs. professional preparation. Programs for young children hire staff with and without formal preparation, bringing large numbers of women to jobs in the field each year. Inadequate in-service education fills the day care training void for the many paraprofessionals working in the field on a transient basis; however, once staff become "hooked" on working with young children, some return to school for specialized preparation or seek other forms of professional development to improve their skills; and some of these even go on for advanced degrees.

Sue Bredekamp (1992) suggests the three most common points of entry into the field are the traditional route, the parent route, and the serendipitous route. The traditional route for early childhood professionals is a major in education or child development, leading

usually to teaching kindergarten or a primary grade. The parent route professionals often discover early childhood through experiences with their own children in Head Start, cooperative preschools, or as family child care providers. The serendipitous route encompasses those professionals who find themselves working with young children after training for some other job or becoming liberally educated.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) national credential was set up to ensure the competence of those who entered early childhood positions through nontraditional routes. Many national leaders in early childhood entered the profession through initial degree programs, but just as many others first worked in the field through the parent or serendipitous route, later getting specialized training for working with young children.

Insufficient numbers. In spite of the increasing number of early childhood professionals who enter the field through various routes, colleges and universities are not producing nearly the number of graduates in early childhood and related fields to staff existing programs. Joan Costley of Wheelock College (cited in NAEYC, 1991) found that graduates of existing 2- and 4-year early childhood programs provide only enough staff to meet the current needs of Massachusetts and New York. This fact, linked with the low salary and benefits available in the U. S. to those who work with young children, leaves many preschools, child care programs, Head Start centers, kindergartens, and infant programs staffed by paraprofessionals who have little or no specific early childhood preparation.

Clearly, a coherent career development system is needed. Michael Levine (1992, p. 50) of the Carnegie Foundation believes that even though "billions of new dollars for Head Start, child care, preschool education, early intervention. . .[are victories, they will not make us] succeed [unless] there is a united, purposeful, and energetic push to convince the public that our agenda is essential to America's success." A coalition of public interests, parents, and providers can convince policy makers and business leaders to build an

infrastructure to support higher quality, more accessible, and better compensated child care and education. With the impetus of the Carnegie-funded National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, progress on common nomenclature, vision, and collaborative approaches will continue to move the early childhood field forward.

The issue of violence in our society may be a catalyst for bringing about awareness of the importance of early education. The National Research Council's Panel on the Understanding and Control of Violent Behavior suggests in its 1993 report Understanding and Preventing Violence that we need a "12- to 15-year perspective . . . to investigate the psychosocial, biomedical, and social processes that explain: (a) why some children exhibit patterns of aggressive behavior at early ages while most do not and (b) why only a minority of aggressive children go on to commit violent acts as adults" (p. 157). Early intervention is seen as necessary if we are to change the direction of children's lives and the way our society lives.

Conclusions and Suggestions for ECE Reform

Colleges of education cannot continue to prepare early childhood teachers the same way we have in the past. The Carnegie survey of 7,000 kindergarten teachers found that "35 percent, or nearly 1.5 million of U. S. children, are not ready to participate in formal education . . . and 42 percent of the teachers also said that children are entering school less prepared than they were five years ago" (Cohen, 1991, p. 10). Children and society have changed and early childhood education must recognize and respond to these changes. The following items are suggestions for ways that teacher education can reform its early childhood programs to reflect an awareness of current conditions in society and the schools and better prepare teachers for the realities they will face:

- * Parent involvement is the keystone to high quality programs; young children cannot thrive unless their parents are centrally connected to their early childhood experiences; make sure that students learn how to work with empowered parents who are their partners

Early Childhood

- * Prepare early childhood teachers to work with children from poverty; nearly half of the children under five will live in poverty during the next decade
- * Recognize the unique needs of teen parents and their children; increasing numbers of children are born to teen parents at low birth weights and are at risk for school success
- * Teach early childhood teachers to work with health, social service, and special education professionals; integrated, comprehensive services are necessary to combat the effects of poverty and other risk factors
- * Link good health to school achievement; ensure that health services and education of young children are integrated
- * Train early childhood teachers to be decision makers, to be program administrators, to serve as site-based managers; ECE degreed teachers become directors and supervisors early in their careers since so many ECE personnel are working without the benefit of formal education in their field
- * Include violence prevention training in early childhood programs; children live in a violent society and perpetuate violence unless taught other more appropriate responses
- * Recruit minority teachers from African-American and Latino groups; within the decade early childhood programs will serve more children from minority groups than from white middle class homes
- * Prepare early childhood students to work with children before and after school; these programs will fall under the jurisdiction of preschool programs
- * Offer courses and practicum experiences with children from birth to eight; erase the artificial barriers between infant care, preschool education, day care, kindergarten, and the primary grades
- * Integrate ECE and Special Education of young children; teachers will work in inclusive settings; teach students to work with other professionals and paraprofessionals

Early Childhood

- * Increase the seamless nature of early childhood experience by making sure that early childhood teachers can relate to the needs of children across programs and age groups
- * Make teachers at ease in the variety of ECE settings so that children can make the transition from day care to Head Start to public schools or other settings a smooth one
- * Develop research programs that answer questions about infant group care and why some children develop aggressive behaviors
- * Teach students how to organize classrooms for dealing effectively with the multicultural dimensions of society
- * Ground programs in developmentally appropriate practice for children in whatever settings.

If we help our early childhood majors realize they will not all be kindergarten teachers in the public schools, we will also prepare them to serve the children of this country and the early childhood profession in new and innovative ways. The traditional early childhood education of yesterday cannot prepare teachers for the children of tomorrow. Early childhood teacher education reform has come late, but not before it is needed. Our diverse roots and traditions do not make it easy to change but unless we shape the span of professional training existing in the U. S.--CDA, preservice training workshops, 2- and 4-year programs, and graduate education (Morgan, 1991).

Research indicates that "the most important determinant of the quality of children's experiences are the adults who are responsible for children's care and education; specialized preparation is a critical predictor of these adults' ability to provide high-quality experiences for children" (NAEYC, 1991, p. 37). If America's "children are to enter school ready to learn," America's teachers of young children must have high quality training options at all levels of professional development available to them.

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